

Agencies Escape

The Long Arm of the CIA: Few

Thousands' of Contacts Perform Secret Tasks

By Norman Kempster
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The CIA has "thousands" of contacts throughout government service who occasionally perform secret tasks for the spy agency, a retired colonel who used to be the CIA's man in the Air Force said yesterday.

L. Fletcher Prouty said the dual role of most of these contacts is known to the heads of their departments although fellow workers probably are unaware of their connection with the CIA.

Prouty said he had been informed that the CIA contact in the Nixon White House was Alexander Butterfield, the man who two years ago revealed the existence of former President Richard M. Nixon's secret taping system.

PROUTY SAID he assumed that Nixon knew of Butterfield's CIA activities. In any event, Prouty added, the job of a contact is not to spy on his boss or fellow workers but to serve as the person the CIA goes to

when it needs help from another government agency.

Butterfield's wife, the Ford White House and the CIA all denied that Butterfield had any links with the CIA. Butterfield could not be reached for comment.

Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., a member of the Senate select intelligence committee, said he had heard reports from sources other than Prouty that Butterfield had CIA connections. But Baker said he has been

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unable to confirm those rumors.

Meanwhile, the National Council of Scientology Ministers called for the dismissal of Dr. Theodore Marris from his post as deputy assistant to President Ford for public liaison, a job that makes him the White House link to groups ranging from churches to bicentennial organizations. The council said Marris had a "30 year history of activity within the CIA."

In a telephone interview, Marris, a physician, said he served as a medical officer for Cubans during training for the Bay of Pigs inva-

sion. Marris said that was his only association with the CIA. He said the White House was aware of the matter at the time he was hired.

ASKED if he was the CIA's man at the White House, Marris said, "No, I am not it."

Prouty, the author of a book on the CIA called "The Secret Team," said he served as CIA contact for the Air Force and later for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The 57-year-old former officer is now a public relations official for Amtrak.

He said when he was with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the early 1960s, the Army's CIA contact was Alexander M. Haig Jr., who later served as Nixon's White House chief of staff and is now NATO commander.

Prouty said he did not know if Haig retained his relations with the CIA after he became Nixon's chief aide.

In explaining the duties of a CIA contact, Prouty said that in his Air Force

role, he arranged military cover for some CIA activities. This once included flying two Cuban nationals to Havana for an intended attempt on the life of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

THE CONTACT with the Customs Bureau might make sure a defector from a Communist country would have no trouble clearing customs, Prouty added.

He said the contact is not required to file reports with the CIA although he said some may do so on their own.

There are thousands of such contacts in both military and civilian jobs, he said. In the Army, Prouty said, there are 605 units which provide support to the CIA. Some CIA agents are assigned to these units along with regular Army personnel.

Prouty related that he once mentioned the number of units in a briefing for then Army Chief of Staff Lyman Lemnitzer. He said Lemnitzer expressed surprise at the figure.

"He didn't realize that the CIA had run away with itself to the point that there were 605 units," Prouty said.

Senate and House intelligence investigators began looking into the CIA's relations with the rest of the government after two members of the House intelligence committee said their staff had developed evidence pointing to a surreptitious infiltration of CIA agents into the White House and other government offices.

IN AN EFFORT to refute the charges of "penetration," the CIA's supporters lifted the cover of secrecy from the agency's normal operations with other departments.

Rep. Lucien Nedzi, D-Mich., one of the few congressmen who are regularly briefed by the CIA, said the agency sometimes "details" employes to work for other departments.

Nedzi read from a classified report which the CIA inspector general sent to CIA Director William E. Colby on May 21, 1973: "For many years the CIA has de-

tailed employes to the immediate office of the White House and to components associated with the office of the President such as the Council on International Economic Policy and the PFIAB (President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board).

The detailed employes included several at the Treasury, at least one in a senior post at the Agency for International Development and a clerk-typist who worked for Peter G. Peterson in both of his government jobs — Nixon's foreign trade adviser and Commerce Secretary.

JOHN R. BARTELS JR. who resigned May 30 after heading the Drug Enforcement Administration since its creation in July 1973, said in an interview that he had learned that 13 CIA-trained agents were on the DEA payroll about two weeks after taking over his job.

He said they received a brief period of training by the CIA in how to detect internal corruption before going through the drug agency's own recruit training. After being sworn in, he said, they were used as undercover agents within the organization to try to find possible corruption.

Bartels said he ordered a stop to the internal undercover operation because it posed the danger that the careers of DEA agents might be damaged without the opportunity for the agent to defend himself.

When allegations of CIA domestic spying surfaced last year, Bartels said he sought and obtained a personal assurance from Colby that the DEA had not been used as a front.

IT HAS BEEN KNOWN for years that the CIA uses U.S. embassies and other overseas offices to provide "cover" for agents. But it was less well known that CIA employes were assigned to domestic jobs in government.

Nedzi, chairman of a House committee on CIA oversight and regarded as a supporter of the agency, said Congress should reassess the practice of detaching

CIA employes to other departments. But he emphasized that any abuses that might be found are far less serious than would be secret infiltration of a government office without the knowledge of its chief.

Rep. Ronald Dellums, D-Calif., one of two congressmen who made the original infiltration charges, said he still believes the evidence will support the allegations. But he said the charges could be hard to prove, particularly because the CIA destroyed some of its records in 1973.

"Up to this minute, I would say that for the most part the President did not know" about the activities of CIA personnel in the White House, Dellums said.

BUT HE SAID even if the President knew, "We have to look at the aspects of having an agent in an office without the knowledge of his fellow workers."

While Dellums seemed to be softening his charge a bit, White House Press Secretary Ronald Nessen was softening his statement that there had "never" been a CIA agent infiltrated into the White House.

"I failed to make clear, in responding to questions in this area, and maybe I should have made clear, that I was speaking specifically of the present White House," he said. "I can only speak for this administration."

Nessen added that "We have no reason to believe there ever has been such an agent."

MEANWHILE, the Senate select intelligence committee questioned two top Kennedy administration officials — national security adviser McGeorge Bundy and Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara — in its investigation of CIA assassination plots. Following their testimony, both men issued terse statements saying they had no reason to believe that either President John F. Kennedy or his brother, Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy had ever authorized a plan to kill a foreign leader.

Neither Bundy nor McNamara would answer questions of reporters.